# THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN.

VOL. XXII. NO. 38. BLOOMFIELD, N. J., SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1904. PRICE FIVE CENTS.


## AN INTERVIEW

BETWEEN A CITIZEN AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN.

**Explanation of the Attitude of the Citizen Members of that Committee—Difference Between the Town Council's Recommendation and the Resolution of October 29th.—Some Reasons Why Taxpayers Should Vote Against Purchase.**

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CITIZEN:

SIR: I have heard a number of citizens express a desire for an opinion from the citizen members of the Committee of Fifteen—Messrs. Ward, Oakes, Stout, Lawrence, Beach, Bailey, Garabrant and McGowan—as to the wisdom of approving the proposed purchase of the Orange Water Company's pipe plan at the election of next Tuesday, 19th inst. Having had a long interview with one of the citizen members of that committee, in which he stated that these gentlemen were not fully agreed among themselves as to the wisest course in the present complicated situation, and so would make no recommendation, but leave the citizens to decide for themselves, I venture to submit a few facts which I have gathered, and conclusions resulting from those facts.

The complicated situation which confronts the people of Bloomfield has no doubt resulted from the unwise interference of members of the Town Council with the sub-committee appointed by the Committee of Fifteen to conduct negotiations. Of course in a delicate and important negotiation like this, everybody not having the matter directly in hand should have religiously refrained from having any communications whatever with the water company's representatives. Had they done so, it is more than probable the sub-committee would have succeeded in arranging the whole matter on some satisfactory and fair basis. However, the citizen members accomplished one good result in saving the town $60,000 on the cost of the plant, if it be purchased as now proposed.

As appears in the report of the Committee of Fifteen at their meeting on July 15, it was voted that a contract similar to that of past years was preferable, and a purchase of the plant only deemed advisable at not to exceed $90,000, in case a reasonable contract could not be made. This preference for a contract instead of a purchase is concurred in by many thoughtful citizens for various reasons. Under a contract we would know exactly what our water will cost, while under town ownership nobody can tell the cost and expense which will be involved. We already have a considerable bonded indebtedness with a practical certainty of a large increase in the near future for school-houses, fire-houses, Passaic Valley sewer, etc. The measure of ability exhibited in our town government is not, in the minds of many citizens, such as to encourage plans for putting more responsibility on them; a water department adds to the patronage which will be striven for in our town politics, a feature to be deprecated.

It has occasioned some surprise that in the report and recommendation of the Committee of Fifteen on October 29, no reference was made to the preference for a contract, although the judgment of the citizen members of that committee is said to have still favored that view. From all I can learn it was not urged then, as the main point was to defeat the scheme for buying the plant for $150,000, and to urge a contract just then might have drawn a line between the friends and opponents of municipal ownership and secured votes for the proposed purchase.

Besides there was a desire if possible to settle the matter and secure harmony of action. Some citizen members of the committee, to secure this, would have acceded to a purchase at $90,000, although it is more than the plant is worth, had the Council accepted the action of the meeting of October 29 as a whole, rescinded the call for an election on November 10, and united with the other members of the committee in seeking to carry out the instruction of that meeting. This, however, the Council refused to do, insisting on putting the town to the expense and trouble of the election. When the election had been held, resulting in such an overwhelming defeat for the proposition to purchase, the most of the citizen members of the committee felt that the Orange Water Company would realize that they had been misled as to the attitude of Bloomfield on the water question and might be willing to make a reasonable contract, or if not that the plant should be bought at not exceeding $75,000, which is its full value. It is the firm conviction of many that an offer of $75,000 would have been accepted by the Orange Water Company.

There is a wide-spread impression that the proposed purchase to be voted on next Tuesday is on the same basis as the recommendation adopted October 29, but that is not so. The action of October 29 merely advised buying the plant for $90,000, while the proposed deal also involves assuming a contract with the Montclair Water Company at $80 per million gallons, a very high price.

Within the past month Harrison has contracted with Jersey City at $57, and there is good reason to believe that Bloomfield could contract at about $50—certainly not over $60. As the quantity of water consumed by this town is shown by the meter to be 350 million gallons per year, the additional cost of water above a fair market price, involved in assuming the contract with the Montclair Water Company, which has over fifteen months yet to run, is about $14,000 practically added to the cost of the plant. Probably in any case the town would have to make use of the Montclair Water Company's supply for a time until other arrangements could be made which would reduce this loss to say $10,000.

On account of this condition attached to the purchase at $90,000, it is evident the plan is not the same as that recommended by the committee of citizens at the meeting of October 29. As before stated, the gentlemen who made that report are not entirely united on this question; two or three of them in view of the offer of $90,000 having been made and accepted in apparent good faith, are disinclined to favor recommending citizens to vote against it, although they have grave doubts of its wisdom. The large majority of the citizen members of the committee are definitely opposed to the proposition in its present form. Under these circumstances, it is stated, no recommendation will be made either way, leaving the citizens to decide for themselves.

Now, what will be the results of the approval by voters on Tuesday next, of this proposed purchase? First, a heavy increase of taxes or water rates or both. Probably some increase is unavoidable, but this plan means a large increase as any one can readily figure out as follows:

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| 360,000,000 gallons water at $80 | $28,800 |
| Interest on purchase bonds, $90,000, at 4 per cent | 3,600 |
| Expense of maintenance, operation and repairs, say | 3,000 |
| Total, | $34,500 |
| Present total income of Orange Water Company from public and private consumers in Bloomfield | $17,400 |
| Increased cost | $17,100 |

This additional cost must be paid either in form of increased water rates or in taxes.

Second, the purchase involves not only a bond issue of $90,000, but an unknown additional amount in the immediate future for extension of the system and replacing a considerable amount of small pipe (too small for safety), with larger pipe. There will also no doubt be immediately proposed the building of a pumping station, etc., (indeed it is stated the Council now have in their possession a proposition for erecting such a plant at a cost of $65,000), so that an investment in the near future of nearly $200,000 will probably be advocated in connection with water supply facilities.

Third, there is a strong conviction that the explanation of the enormous consumption of water by this town as shown by the meters—more than double the standard of consumption adopted by experts—is that the pipes have some very bad leaks through which the water is running to waste in enormous quantities. These leaks are likely to grow worse. If the plant is bought, expert engineers should be engaged at once to test the pipes, discover such leaks and repair them, a matter involving a considerable expense.

Fourth, it will add to the responsibilities of our town officials, and there is grave doubt in the minds of the many as to the wisdom of increasing these, especially if the past year has given a fair sample of the ability with which they are to be handled.

What if the proposed purchase is not approved at the polls?

First, there is no danger of our water supply being cut off, at least not without a reasonable time being given to make new arrangements. The courts would require that.

Second, there would probably be an increase of water rates, but the water company would not be allowed to charge exorbitant rates, and the probability is they would be less than the cost under the purchase scheme.

Third, perhaps a new contract might be arranged for a short term, or possibly a lease of the plant, with privilege of purchase within five years at a rental based on a valuation of $90,000 at 4 per cent., and 2 per cent. for depreciation; or a purchase might be made at a satisfactory figure without an agreement to assume the Montclair Water Company's contract, or the price might be left to arbitration, in which event, if the case were properly presented, it would probably be obtained for $75,000, as that is all it is apparently worth.

Now, Mr. Editor, this is the result of diligent and careful inquiries and considerable thought. You are as competent as I to decide in view of all the facts what should be done, so I will not advise you, but will simply say for myself I shall vote "against."

SECOND WARD.


This is hard weather on coal, but the Jeddo stands the test. Try a ton. JOHN J. MURRAY.—*Adv't.*

Buy Wm. Day's bread, best in town, at 23 Broad street.—*Adv't.*


## THREE MEETINGS

**Held in the School Halls During the Past Week for the Discussion of the Water Supply Question—Advocates of Municipal Ownership in the Majority at the Meetings and Resolutions Adopted Favoring that Policy.**

Meetings were held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of the past week in the public school halls for the discussion of the water question. The first of these meetings was held in Fairview School Hall Monday night. Charles F. Vogelius presided, assisted by Charles H. Madole as Secretary. It was unanimously agreed to support at the polls on Tuesday, January 19, the proposition of buying the plant of the Orange Water Company for the sum of $90,000. Councilman Herbert C. Farrand, who was one of the speakers at the meeting, says that there were between twenty-five and thirty persons present. Charles W. Powers of the Third Ward made effective remarks in favor of the purchase of the plant in order that the town would be in a position to control the source of water supply. None of those present appeared disposed to oppose the purchase of the water plant, and as a consequence any question asked as to why some people were opposed to the purchase of the plant could only be answered in a conjectural way. Councilman Farrand, who opposed the payment of $150,000 for the water plant, is an ardent advocate of the acceptance by the people of the $90,000 proposition, and his remarks at the Fairview meeting were in favor of purchase.

Superintendent of the Public Schools W. E. Chancellor was among those who asked some questions as to the future plans of the Council in the event of purchase of the plant. Several others present expressed optimistic views in regard to the benefits that it is anticipated will be realized under municipal ownership.

The second meeting was held in Prospect Street School Tuesday night. Samuel Ellor presided, and Thomas B. Agnew acted as Secretary. The discussion was along the same line as that followed in the Fairview meeting. Those who spoke were Charles F. Vogelius, Charles W. Powers, Samuel Ellor, Councilman Herbert C. Farrand, Charles F. Kocher, William Ellor, A. H. Edgerley, Mr. Bedell, William Johnson, and others.

A resolution to support the $90,000 proposition at the polls was adopted without a dissenting vote. Herbert C. Farrand, in reply to inquiries as to the source of supply of water, said that four different sources of supply were open to the town—the West Jersey Water Company, the Eagle Rock Water Company, the West Summit Water Company, and the city of East Orange. None of the above companies, except the West Summit, is in a position for the immediate fulfilment of a contract.

As in the Fairview meeting, the question of the quality of supply of water was the predominating feature in the Watsessing meeting. Mr. Powers laid particular stress upon that point, as also did Mr. Vogelius.

The third meeting was held in Centre School, Liberty street, Wednesday night. About twenty-five people braved the inclement weather and struggled through the slush to the school house. Councilman Herbert C. Farrand presided and made a statement as to the position of the Town Council on the water question.

Mr. Farrand cited the case of South Orange as a good example of the benefits of municipal ownership. The village of South Orange, Mr. Farrand said, purchased water from the West Summit Water Company at a rate of $85 per million gallons and distributed it to the householders at a rate of $210 per million gallons.

The West Summit Water Company, Mr. Farrand said, was among the companies that would compete for the contract for furnishing a supply of water to this town. Other sources of supply that Mr. Farrand said would be available were the West Jersey Water Company, the Eagle Rock Water Company and the city of East Orange.

C. W. Powers spoke in favor of purchase of the plant on the ground that it gave the town the control of the source of supply. Mr. Powers expressed himself as much opposed to the Passaic river water for domestic purpose.

Godlove C. Seibert, Charles H. Ashley, George W. Cook, Mr. Haviland, W. E. Chancellor, Charles F. Vogelius and others participated in the discussion.

### Mr. Causbrook Promoted.

William Causbrook, who, since the death of C. R. Nelson, has had charge of the Montclair office of the Public Service Corporation Gas Department, was offered and has accepted the position of manager of the company's Plainfield office. Henry Taylor, who has long been connected with the Montclair office, will go with Causbrook to Plainfield.


This is hard weather on coal, but the Jeddo stands the test. Try a ton. JOHN J. MURRAY.—*Adv't.*


## THE MESSIAH.

**Grand Production of Handel's Celebrated Oratorio in the Watsessing M. E. Church—A Large Audience Delighted with the Music—The Choirmaster and all Who Participated Congratulated Over Their Excellent Work.**

The production of Handel's oratorio, "The Messiah," by the Watsessing M. E. Church choir on Friday evening, January 8, was a success. To many of those present who came to the church with the expectation of enduring an amateur production of the celebrated musical work, it was a surprise. To those who had confidently assured their friends that the oratorio would be presented in a manner excelling any production of it ever given in this town or vicinity, it was a source of much gratification to have their assurances amply fulfilled. That "The Messiah" was to be sung in the Watsessing Church, that it was to be attempted on an elaborate scale, and that a more complete rendition of it was contemplated than is usually undertaken by church choirs, had become well known in musical circles throughout the county, and as a consequence many people from out of town were present, and not a few of them came prepared to critically follow the performance throughout.

The criticisms, while they varied some in minor particulars as to the work of the several soloists, were generally to the effect that the production was an excellent one, and that it reflected great credit on the conductor, the choruses, the orchestra and the soloists. In drawing comparisons between Friday night's production of "The Messiah" and the elaborate production of it given in New York, due allowance must be made for the surrounding conditions. Choirmaster Ellor was compelled of necessity to crowd his chorus of fifty-five vocalists and his orchestra of twenty musicians within a rather small compass, and the acoustic properties of the church were not such as to afford full effect to the vocal work. It was doubtless these disadvantages that gave rise to some of the minor points of criticism, such as the orchestra sometimes "drowning" the soloists.

Choirmaster Ellor's interpretation of the oratorio was pronounced correct by experienced critics, and showed evidence of long and arduous study, and the chorus work splendidly demonstrated masterly training. Mr. Ellor displayed the happy faculty of inspiring the chorus with spirited zeal, and there was no element of dulness or drag visible throughout the entire performance. He was admirably assisted by the organist, Charles W. Ellor, and the leader of the orchestra, John Kaufman.

We consider "The Messiah" this year to have been the best musical performance that has ever been given by the Watsessing choir. The work of the chorus in the first choral number, "And the Glory of the Lord," was, on the whole, the best ever sung anywhere; not only was it correctly sung, but the enthusiasm, freshness of voice, and the spirit with which it was given, made it truly inspiring. The chorus, "For unto us a Child is born," was sung according to the Damrosch traditions; but while the first part might have been sung a little softer, the climaxes, "Wonderful Counsellor," were tremendously effective, and the whole number was sung with clearness and precision. "His Yoke is easy" was sung after the markings of Professor Prout, and this most difficult and delicate chorus was given with good effect. The slow, stately fugue, "Behold the Lamb of God," was firmly and broadly rendered, and was well received. The "Hallelujah" chorus, the climax of the work, was sung with great power and earnestness; the trumpet parts in the number were particularly effective. The "Amen" chorus, a very difficult fugue, was correctly and clearly sung. It is very seldom that an intricate fugue like this is much more than a jumble, every attack was firmly made, and each part well sustained, making the chorus a fitting close to a performance, and showing careful and conscientious work on the part of choir and conductor.

The soloists did their work well, without exception. Miss Marie Stoddard possesses a clear, full voice of great range of power, and she sang the work in true oratorio style. The audience was particularly delighted with her rendering of of "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion" and "Come unto Him."

Miss Florence Stockwell, well known here, makes a fine Messiah contralto. Her voice has the necessary fullness and sympathetic quality for the work. She was particularly pleasing in "He was despised" and "He shall feed His Flock."

Edward Walker, tenor, sang conscientiously and in good voice. His best work was in "Every Valley."

Millard Roubaud, well known as the basso of the Westminster Church, and our fellow-townsman, came near to being the ideal Messiah bass. The solo, "The People that Walked in Darkness," was well suited to his style and voice, and his rendering of "Why do the Nations?" was a fine effort, and won well-deserved praise.

The orchestra was a capable body of musicians, and although all the wind instruments called for in the score were not there, the missing parts were so well arranged for the instruments present that the effect was surprisingly good. The overture was played with full and noble tone. The pastoral symphony was well rendered, the flutes and clarinets being retained, except in the repeat, with fine effect. The symphony is now being played with strings alone. The accompaniments to the soloists, however, were not always smooth.

The assistant soloists were Miss Marie Stoddard of New York, soprano in the Brick Presbyterian Church, East Orange; Miss Florence E. Stockwell of New York, contralto of the Westminster Presbyterian Church; Edward Walker of New York, tenor in the Hillside Presbyterian Church, East Orange, and Millard Roubaud of Glen Ridge, bass in the Westminster Church.

The chorus was as follows: Sopranos—Mrs. Joseph W. Ellor, Mrs. John Greenbank, Mrs. L. B. Downs, Mrs. Arthur A. Ellor, Mrs. Joseph Law, Mrs. Doane, Mrs. G. Reese Edwards, Mrs. Jesse Pierce, Mrs. Herbert Edgerley, Mrs. John A. Hibbins, Mrs. Albert Ellor, Mrs. Seibert, Mrs. Smith, Miss Edith Gerling, Miss Dorr, Miss Pauline Kleiber, Miss Bessie Downs, the Misses Copp.

Altos—Mrs. Ira Smith, Mrs. Joseph Weden, Mrs. James Crowell, Miss Jones, Miss Grimshaw, Miss Greer, Miss Crowell, Miss Allen, Miss H. Thompson, Miss Brown.

Tenors—George L. Jones, George Dorr, Henry Albinson, William Ellor, Roland Travis, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Schaffer, Mr. Staddleman, Mr. Henderson, Walter Ellor, A. H. Edgerley, L. B. Dows.

Bassos—G. Reese Edwards, Ernest Law, James Ellor, George Oakes, Louis Ellor, Charles F. Kocher, Wm. H. Ellor, Mr. Hall, T. Griffith Jones, Albert Ellor, Mr. Sherman, Thomas Lee, Joseph Law.

### Glen Ridge Postal Troubles.

Glen Ridge, a model borough in respect to streets, sewers and other improvements, is essentially a residential community of the highest class, but its postal facilities are of the old style country hamlet order. The post office is in the Lackawanna Railroad station and the postmaster combines the duty of caring for the Government mails with the manifold duties of station master, ticket agent, baggage master and general local factotum of the railroad company.

Business men on arriving at the station from New York at night stand sometimes twenty or thirty in a line waiting for their mail.

It is no wonder Glen Ridge people are getting tired of such conditions. The matter has been receiving considerable discussion in club circles recently and bids fair soon to receive public recognition as a grievance. Glen Ridge ought to have a new post office with a postmaster who can give his whole time to his official duties, and it ought to have free postal delivery; the latter certainly. There is no reason why the residents of the borough should be compelled to endure the inconvenience and annoyance of the present backwoods methods.

Bloomfield and Montclair have free delivery. The system of either could readily be extended to include the borough that lies between them and a sub-station of either post office would then answer all the postal requirements of the community. There is little doubt that a proper representation of the facts to the Post Office Department at Washington will bring a remedy. Why not place the matter in the hands of Representative Wylie at once?—*Newark Advertiser.*

### Empire Theatre.

"The Worst Woman in London," under the management of R. G. Craerin, which comes to the Empire Theatre Newark, for the week ending January 23 has scored an instantaneous hit in New York, where it received its initial presentation at the American Theatre November 9, 1903. The play is a melodrama of intense action and deep interest, and tells a singularly sympathetic love story. It comes direct from the Adelphi Theatre, London. Matinees Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

### Sleigh Ride.

The employees of R. E. Heckel & Sons' establishment enjoyed a sleigh ride to Springfield Monday night, where a supper was served at the Springfield Hotel, followed by dancing. Among those who participated were: Mr. and Mrs. Harry Weeks, Mr. and Mrs. L. Platz, Mr. and Mrs. A. Gahs, Mr and Mrs. Charles, Mr. and Mrs. George Fornoff, Albert and Miss Johnson and Leonard Weber.


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## THE WATER QUESTION.

STRONG CASE MADE OUT BY ADVOCATES OF MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

**Councilman Farrand Fears an Epidemic of Typhoid Fever—Applications for Extensions of the Water Mains will be Granted—A Liberal Administration of the Water Department Promised—Some Features of the Other Side of the Case.**

The question of whether or not it is advisable for the town of Bloomfield to possess its own water supply plant is not a new question. Advocates of municipal ownership were at hand and advocated their line of policy when it was first proposed to introduce a water supply into the town upwards of twenty years ago. When the first ten-year contract expired in 1893 the advocates of municipal ownership made a strenuous effort to enforce the adoption of their policy and succeeded in having the matter referred to a committee of thirty citizens for an investigation and report. The advocates of municipal ownership were in the minority in the committee, but they were a formidable minority and succeeded in creating a serious division of opinion among the citizens of the town as to the best course to pursue—to renew the contract with the Orange Water Company or to purchase the existing plant, erect a pumping station and control and operate the water distribution here in town.

There always have been and are now a large number of citizens in this town who firmly believed twenty years ago that favorable conditions did not exist here for the profitable operation of a town-owned water plant. Ten years ago they were still more firmly convinced that the conditions were less favorable for the adoption of the policy of municipal ownership, and to-day they are stronger in their conviction than ever that political conditions in Bloomfield to-day are such that it would be folly for the town to embark in the water business. They are of the opinion that the opportunity for successful operation of a municipal water plant has lessened instead of enhanced with the lapse of time.

These people who have opposed municipal ownership on every occasion that it has been brought forth as an issue may have erred in judgment—and enthusiastic municipalists do not hesitate to charge that they have—but this fact stands out clear and distinct above all controversy, namely, the majority of the people have been with them, and every attempt to enforce municipal ownership has had to succumb to an overwhelming majority sentiment against it.

The people of Bloomfield are on the eve of another battle over this same issue. The contest has taken on a new phase. The phalanx known as the "Old Guard," composed of well-known and influential citizens, to whom a large element always looked to to lead the fight on the conservative side when a question of public policy is the issue, have stoically wrapped their cloaks around themselves and assumed an attitude of cold indifference as to the outcome of the contest—metaphorically saying: "We told you twenty years ago this thing was foolishness; we told you so again ten years ago, and we don't propose to tell you again." "Choose ye this day for yourselves whom ye will serve."

On the other hand, the municipalist is alive, active, enthusiastic and warm-hearted for the welfare of the people.

Such are the conditions at the close of the campaign that will close with the voting on Tuesday.

In the campaign now on the advocates of municipal ownership have not presented their case from a financial standpoint. They do not claim that the town can serve water any cheaper than at present rates, at least for a while, but they do claim that the rates ought not to be raised. It will be noted, of course, that the qualifying words "ought not" lack the positive ring of "will not."

The advocates of municipal ownership primarily base their case on a public dread of the Passaic river water as a source of supply, and in their estimation the control of the water plant for that specific purpose takes precedence of any financial consideration. In the public meetings held during the past week there has been visibly portrayed at each meeting the possibility of an epidemic of typhoid fever here such as visited and devastated Butler, Pa., and this danger is momentary and continuous as long as the people are compelled to use Passaic river water, and it is asserted that if the contract is renewed with the Orange Water Company the East Jersey Water Company will furnish the water, and the supply will come from the Little Falls plant of that company.

The position taken by the municipalists is a shrewd one and a strong one. Scare the people into believing that the public health is endangered and they will stampede in a direction in which it


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